

(1) Unconstitutional

unconstitutional claims could push the county into chaos.

The law was the product of national consensus, Danish noted and it can certainly be said the current constitution is like a string and chin linking all the parties and groups of great nationalism and nothing out of the chin.

Fazal Hadi Muslimyar, Meshrano Jirga chairman, supported the speech of the second vice-president on respect for the constitution and national identity. He said the law must be enforced.

A vast majority of the people supported the national interest as enunciated in the basic law, he said, urging government leaders to sort out their differences.

Protection of the core national interest should be given top priority, the Senate chairman concluded. (Pajhwok)

(2) Turkey: Afghan

FETO and its U.S.-based leader Fetullah Gulen orchestrated the defeated coup of July 15, 2016, which left 250 people martyred and nearly 2,200 injured.

Ankara also accuses FETO of being behind a long-running campaign to overthrow the state through the infiltration of Turkish institutions, particularly the military, police, and judiciary. (AA)

(3) Second Afghan

suicide attacks, the disputes have added to a picture of weakness and division that has undermined support for Ghani's government ahead of elections scheduled for this year.

It was unclear whether the dispute would threaten Ghani's government and Samangan, a mountainous and largely undeveloped region has little of the strategic importance of Balkh, one of the richest provinces in the country. But the standoff has underlined the fractious political climate, marked by increasingly open divisions between Afghanistan's mix of different ethnicities.

Khaddam is an ethnic Turkman but both he and Atta Noor are from Jamiat-islami, a party mainly supported by Persian-speaking ethnic Tajiks that has been increasingly hostile to Ghani, an ethnic Pashtun.

Although Ghani nominally shares power with Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah from Jamiat, the two sides have become more and more alienated, with Jamiat accusing Ghani of monopolizing power and favoring his own Pashtun supporters.

Formed in the wake of the disputed 2014 election that forced the two rival candidates Ghani and Abdullah into an uneasy partnership, the government has struggled to present a united front amid growing criticism of its handling of the insurgency.

The splits have been thrown into sharp relief by a row over new electronic ID cards, which have drawn bitter opposition as they register national identity as "Afghan", a term used in the past for Pashtuns, traditionally the most powerful ethnic group.

Many Tajiks see the term as a means of entrenching longstanding Pashtun dominance and refuse to accept the cards.

In a symbolic move to build support for the new so-called "e-tazkiras", Ghani and his wife, were among the first to take their new cards last week.

However the move only underlined divisions in the government, with Jamiat leaders refusing to follow suit and declaring that the issue required a national consensus to be developed through further debate. (Reuters)

(4) Afghan Conflict

The Committee was also told that the current cost of war is much less than when over 100,000 American servicemen were waging a war on terror in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan. Then, the bill hit \$100 billion a year. That then leads to the question of the total cost of the Afghan war since 2001. Various factors used to calculate the cost tend to change the net expenditures. However, different estimates show American taxpayers have paid between \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion for this obscure war.

If we add in the war in Iraq, the total figure is close to \$5 trillion. However, again, these are not the final figures as various experts use different baselines in making their calculations.

America is still very rich by any standards. Otherwise, how could it funnel huge sums of money into such senseless conflicts? In case of Iraq, at least the administration has the saving grace of officially ending the war and pulling out troops. Unfortunately, there is no end in sight

for the Afghan war, which still rages on in its 17th year. It has been termed as the longest running war in American history (even beyond Vietnam).

The figures for the Afghan or Iraq wars, it should be stressed, are just the cost suffered by the United States. Imagine the human and material cost for Afghanistan, Iraq, NATO allies and the neighbors of these two countries.

For example, Pakistan has officially said that its economy suffered a \$123 billion loss since start of the conflict in 2001. It also lost more than 70,000 civilians and over 6,000 security personnel in bombings and fighting against militants.

The downside of the Afghan conflict is that there is no indication, as yet, of who is winning. There is a civilian government in Kabul supported by the international community whose writ, however, is limited.

Taliban militants control vast swathes of countryside, but are unable to topple the government. They cannot win the war militarily while American forces are stationed in Afghanistan.

Equally, the American troops are far away from a decisive win. As the militants detonate bombs in Kabul, Americans are coming under increasing criticism from Afghan politicians for failing to fix the security problem.

Former president Hamid Karzai, in an interview with the Associated Press, accused the Americans of using Afghan soil for their own strategic objectives. He said the purpose of American troops being in Afghanistan was not "to stop extremism."

He continued: "In my view, their intention is to keep us divided and weak so they can carry on their objectives in this region....They (Americans) have their global politics and rivalries. They have China as a great rising power. They have Russia as a revitalized, reenergized great power on the world scene, and they feel challenged and even threatened."

It is not for first time Karzai has targeted the U.S. for failures. In another interview he accused it of turning a blind eye towards Da'esh, which controls the border region and has been involved in several lethal attacks inside Afghanistan.

American forces have obviously failed to eliminate the Taliban but they can take credit for decimating al-Qaeda in the region. However, the threat posed by the latter has been taken over by Da'esh.

The details of cost of Afghan war shared with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at least help to partially identify the cause of trouble in Afghanistan. The money given in economic assistance is abysmally low and a reason for failure to stabilize the country. (APP)

(5) Kandahar

Kandahar police chief Gen Abdul Raziq said no individual or party reserved the right to oppose the distribution of electronic National Identity Cards.

"No one had the right to seek political mileage from the process", Raziq remarked. Those who do not count themselves as Afghans should leave the country."

He urged the government to start distribution of e-NICs as soon as possible and said he would stand against element creating problems in this regard. Some government officials completed their biometric process and the process would start soon. However, Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdulla Abdullah opposed with the distribution and called for postponement of the distribution of e-ID cards. (Pajhwok)

(6) Sherpao Faults

the mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Relations between the neighbours had nosedived, as weak civilian governments did not pay adequate attention to enhanced bilateral cooperation, he noted.

As long as Afghanistan remained unstable, economic prosperity and peace would elude the region, remarked the former chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (Pajhwok)

(7) Peace in Pakistan

leader, who added nationalist parties wanted equal rights for the Pakhtuns in national resources and due representation in top government jobs.

His party had been doing all it could for the rights and survival of Pakhtuns, he claimed. "We were victimised for raising our voice. The blood of Pakhtuns is being shed on both sides of the Durand Line."

All area between Amo and Abaseen rivers belonged to the Pakhtuns, who

had been living there 500 years before the birth of HazratEssa (AS), Achakzai commented.

The Pakhtuns fought against British colonial forces in the 18th century and liberated the region. "We were not given this land in charity but our forefathers snatched it from the occupying forces."

Protests over the killing of Naeqebullah Mehsud in a fake police encounter in Karachi symbolised the anger of Pakhtuns over the discrimination they were meted out, he added. (Pajhwok)

(8) Dostum-Linked

the lawmaker.

When Qaisari received a tip-off, he and his supporters took refuge in a nearby Afghan National Army (ANA) base south of the main provincial airport, the source said.

The legislator told Pajhwok Afghan News Fathullah Qaisari and Rahmatullah Turkistani, former Jawzjan police chief, plotted to kill him in a bomb attack as part of a 1.5 million afghanis deal.

He claimed arresting the alleged bomber, who had placed explosives in a plastic bottle under his bed. The man, after confessing to his crime, was handed over to the National Directorate of Security (NDS) four months ago.

But the government had not yet taken action against Fathullah Qaisari and Rahmatullah Turkistani, he complained, saying he was forced to arrest the people behind the plot.

"Two months back, Rahmatullah Turkistani came to Maimana and I tried to arrest him, but the governor told me this problem would be resolved through legal channels. However, no legal action has been taken so far," he added.

He charged the Faryab governor with complicity in the ploy and called for his immediate removal.

However, Fathullah Qaisari said he had traveled to Faryab to meet his family members and supporters. After being surrounded by gunmen loyal to Nizamuddin Qaisari, he had to spend a night on the ANA base.

He branded Nizamuddin Qaisari as a lawbreaker, murderer and thief, asking President Ashraf Ghani to bring him to justice.

He denied planting a bomb against Nizamuddin Qaisari, calling the claim a conspiracy against him. The person involved was one of close supporter of Qaisari, he alleged.

On the other hand, the governor's spokesman, Ahmad Javid Baidar, rejected Nizamuddin Qaisari's claims that he supported the MP. He argued a governor should have good relations with all figures and people.

He said the governor organised a security meeting involving religious scholars, elders and civil society activists to discuss the issue and find a solution to it.

Fathullah Qaisari was one of the commanders of Gen. Abdur Rashid Dostum, but he later joined Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's camp in the 2014 presidential election campaign. (Pajhwok)

(9) Pul-I-Khumri

that some traffic official did not allow taxis to pick passengers while private vehicles had full freedom in the city. The trend inflicted financial losses to the taxi drivers, he added.

He added, if we pick up some passengers from Pul-i-Khumri square then the city's traffic charge us 200 afs but they don't charge the private and non custom paid vehicles if they committed the same action.

Other drivers shared similar concerns. Qadir, another taxi driver accused traffic official over bribery, saying that some drivers offered money to traffic officials not to bother them and give them the freedom to pick passenger from where they could.

Maj. Mohammad Nabi Nabizada, provincial traffic department head, said in line with the governor, Provincial Council chief and mayor's recommendations taxis and other vehicles are not allow to pick passengers from on the square.

The capital is a small city without specific area for parking. Special stops and parking had been constructed outside the city, he said.

He also rejected the taxis drivers' allegations whether they have given permission to the private vehicles to pick up passengers from every corner of the city they want. (Pajhwok)

(10) India-Iran Sign

their cooperation on Chabahar. They also called upon the countries in the region to come forward for enhancing regional connectivity and take steps to do away with the obstacles on land transit.

Recognising the challenges of terrorism and ideologies of violent extremism, the two leaders reiterated their strong commitment to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stressed that there can be no justification whatsoever for any act of terrorism.

For better cultural exchange, both sides agreed to grant e-visa facility to travelers. They also agreed to hold a Festival of India in Iran and establish a Chair of Indian Studies in the Tehran University. As part of this effort, Indology courses will be made available for Iranian diplomats by the Foreign Service Institute of India while support will be provided for Persian language courses in India. (dna)

(11) Interior Ministry

Representatives of donor countries, the European Union (EU) and the UN, along with the Afghan police welcomed the move.

"As we all know corruption reduces Afghanistan's abilities to fight its enemies and this fight specifically against corruption is most critical in all law enforcement agencies of the country," said Richard Riley Assistant Chief of Mission of the US embassy.

"We have introduced the systems in the ministry of interior to determine that these systems can work in the future in a sense that the systems are never sabotaged when individuals come and go," said Barmak.

The MoI has worked on the project for the past four months in a bid to map out the activities of the Afghan National Police (ANP) over the next four years.

"We have outlined the necessary guidelines to all our lower ranks which include the police commanders and police officers and all other personnel to guide them how to work," added Barmak.

Meanwhile, the CEO Abdullah Abdullah said the Afghan police forces need to keep away from political affiliations. "The issue that the a police member performs his duty, he (police) should perform his duty well and contribute to the election security, he should never try to interfere in the votes of the people," said Abdullah.

Excerpts from the strategic plan:

- War against corruption
- Strengthening transparency, accountability and monitoring
- Undertaking the effective management of the human resources department regarding appointments, promotions based on merit
- Focusing on the support and functions including logistics, procurement, audit and finance
- Reviving the system of training police
- Developing the operational model of the national police
- The continuity of Afghanistan's Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and delivering on the national and international commitments which include of the participation of women; considering ethnic diversity in the ranks of the (ANP) and the MoI.

Reforms in the ANP:
The strategic plan illustrates that the level of public confidence in the Afghan police has significantly declined over the past decade despite police forces demonstrating dedication and sacrifices. Therefore, in the new plan, the MoI will undertake comprehensive measures to close this gap. However, the MoI argues that the relevant body will prefer to implement the reforms process gradually in 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

The new plan also categorizes some internal and external threats to Afghanistan's national security and national interests.

External Threats:

The strategic plan states that the external threats towards Afghanistan include groups associated with extremism, coordinated crime, drugs, terrorism and certain neighboring countries which see Afghanistan as a threat to their national interests.

The plan adds that these groups and circles foresee their interests in destabilizing Afghanistan and try to fuel more chaos in the country. Internal Threats: According to the plan, armed opponents are one of the biggest threats to Afghanistan's national interests.

These threats include:

- Lack of an effective rule of law
- Armed opponents
- Ideological threats
- Daesh threats
- Drug smuggling and narcotics
- Security of borders and Durand Line
- Cyber threats
- Natural threats

- Environmental threats
- Economic threats
- Impact of security situation on economic growth
- Reduction of international aid

The extent of Daesh Threats:

The strategic plan says that over the past few months, the threats emerging from Daesh have significantly increased - the main reason being that a number of terrorist groups announced their allegiance to the group. The plan says that Daesh affiliates are trying to take over the southern and eastern provinces in order to expand their influence towards central Asia and to fuel sectarian violence in the region.

Key areas of reforms in the MoI:

- Combating corruption, especially in the audit, intelligence and major crimes fighting department
- Improving the organizational structure and developing of coordination and cooperation within the MoI
- Strategic management system
- Providing awareness to personnel about policies, procedures of training and hiring
- Outlining the civilian police plan (the new role and functions of police and undertaking the process plan in Kabul and Herat provinces)
- Developing the training of police officers and appointments on the basis of merit
- Developing the educational level of trainers in the police academies
- Strengthening the human resource policies (Tolo news)

(12) Atmar Leaves fo

peace process and addressing other issues in Afghanistan.

Earlier, Dawat-i-Islami party leader Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf also visited Saudi Arabia and discussed counterterrorism efforts with some Saudi officials. (Pajhwok)

(13) FATF Set to

that the US resolution, supported by France and Germany, would come up for discussion at the FATF meeting.

According to Pakistan's leading newspaper Dawn, the resolution -- if adopted -- would place the country on the FATF grey-list of "jurisdictions with deficient anti-money laundering regimes." Pakistan had been the list from 2009 to 2015.

Pakistan hopes China, its all-time ally, Russia, Turkey and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council will oppose the US-led move.

Reuters news agency quoted Miftah Ismail, Pakistan's de facto finance minister, as saying: "We are quite hopeful that even if the US did not withdraw the nomination, we will prevail..." (Pajhwok)

(14) Unemployment

Union meanwhile said around 400,000 new workers enter the job market annually and government needs to implement job creation projects.

The Chairman of the National Union of Afghanistan's Workers and Employees, Maroof Qaderi, said if government does not handle the issue of unemployment properly, in the next few years Afghanistan will witness a crisis in terms of unemployment.

"Enormous unemployment problems exist in the country and still the problems are in place. Government's plans have not been effective in this regard to prevent unemployment and the problem is increasing," said Qaderi.

Unemployment has been one of the reasons behind the high levels of poverty in the country. Experts believe that a lack of major employment projects and insecurity are the reasons for this. (Tolo news)

(15) No One Can

by rolling out e-NIC wants to create discord among the nation.

According to Massoud, government is misusing e-NIC for its political purposes.

"They want to create discord among the Afghan tribes, want to create political tension and finally want the country to face a crisis," said Massoud.

Meanwhile a number of civil society activists in Kabul have asked government to start issuing the new electronic cards as soon as possible.

"e-NIC's fate should be made clear," said one civil society activist Hamida Barmak.

Some tribal elders meanwhile said the issuing of e-NICs based on the president's legislative decree is against the law.

"We do not accept e-NIC unless all the people accept it," Abdull Ghani Baluch, a tribal elder said. (Tolo news)